



## FLAT RANGER: An Interdisciplinary Education Program

What do Yosemite, Statue of Liberty, Mount Rushmore, Badlands, Palo Alto Battlefield, and

Castillo de San Marcos all have in common?

**They're all National Parks!**

### INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION PROGRAM

**Flat Rangers** is an interdisciplinary education program that introduces students to a variety of National Parks and shows them that the park in their backyard – Castillo de San Marcos – is connected to parks as big as Yellowstone and as rich in history as Gettysburg.



#### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**Flat Ranger** follows the travels of a student-created character.

First, students create a cut-out of a male or female Park Ranger. As a well-prepared traveler, the Ranger carries a passport. Next, students write letters to National Parks, asking the Park to mail them information and stamp the Ranger's passport. Flat Rangers and their passports travel to ten different National Parks and are then returned to the students.

Throughout the year students receive brochures, educational materials, photos of Flat Ranger in different parks, and many other items.

### LANGUAGE ARTS, MATH, SCIENCE, & SOCIAL STUDIES

As National Parks preserve unique historic sites and a diversity of habitats, this program serves as a springboard to study U.S. history, geography, and ecology. **Flat Rangers** can help you with standards-based activities such as:

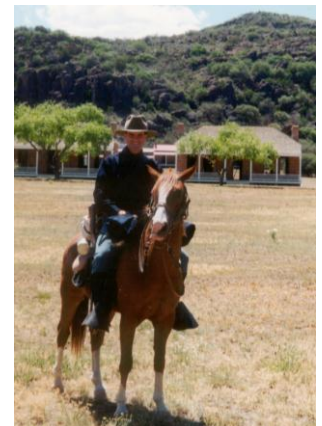
- Create a map to track the journey of your Flat Ranger
- Calculate and create graphs of the distances traveled
- Describe and explain variations in the physical environment, including glaciers
- Discover the stories of individuals who changed communities, such as Lewis & Clark
- Learn about examples of civic organizations, such as the Red Cross
- Retell the heroic deeds of American legends, such as Pecos Bill
- Create your own Activity!



Lewis & Clark NHP  
Lewis & Clark's Winter Camp



Glacier NP  
Variations in Physical Environment



Fort Davis NHS  
Commanded by the real "Pecos Bill"



## Flat Ranger

**Essential Question:** Why are National Parks important?

**Student Learning Objectives:**

Students will learn about National Parks by creating a “Flat Ranger,” reading informational text, writing a journal, and creating a park guide.

**Common Core State Standards**

English Language Arts Studies

*Reading Informational Text:*

4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text

4.7 Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

*Writing:*

4.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagining experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

**Florida-Next Generation  
Sunshine State Standards**

*Social Studies*

SS.4.G.1.4 Interpret political and physical maps using map elements

**Provided Materials**

- Flat Ranger Template
- Sample Student and/or Class Letter
- Park Brochures and information sent from the National Parks

**Teacher-Supplied Materials**

- See page 3 for optional materials

**BACKGROUND:** The National Park Service cares for national parks, a network of nearly 400 natural, cultural and recreational sites across the nation. The treasures in this system – the first of its kind in the world – have been set aside by the American people to preserve, protect, and share the legacies of this land.

People from all around the world visit National Parks to experience America's story, marvel at the natural wonders, and have fun. Places like the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and Gettysburg are popular destinations, but so too are the hundreds of gems like Palo Alto Battlefield NHS in Texas and Castillo de San Marcos NM in Florida.

The National Park Service was established by the Organic Act of 1916. This Act states, “The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks . . . which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

Visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) for more information visit the National Park Service.

## LESSON

### Introduction

1. Tell students that National Parks (NPs) preserve special places that are important to our country. The people who take care of NPs are called Park Rangers.
2. Tell students they will create a Flat Ranger (FR) to mail to NPs. Together you will track FR's journey.
3. Tell students that each National Park FR visits will send us information so we can find about National Parks.
4. Tell students that some people who visit NPs carry a National Park Passport to learn more about NPs. Visitors stamp their passports for a collection of the NPs they've visited.

### Guided Lesson

1. Here are three ideas to create a FR:
  - o Design one FR for the entire class
  - o Have each student design a unique FR
  - o Give students a copy of the provided FR template to color
2. Here are three ideas to write a letter:
  - o Write one letter for the class
  - o Have each student write an individual letter
  - o Use the provided FR letter template
3. Select a National Park. Mail the letter to that Park. All Park listings and addresses can be found at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) and Parks who have previously participated in FR are listed on the attachment.

## MANAGEMENT

1. Preview the activity.
2. Decide how to create the Flat Ranger, letter, and park guides.
3. Gather all materials needed.

### Discovery

1. When information arrives from a park have students:
  - o Using a map, put a marker on the National Park that FR visited
  - o Complete a journal entry or write an essay with the following information:
    1. Name of the National Park visited
    2. State National Park is in
    3. Direction FR traveled
    4. # of miles FR traveled
    5. Why the National Park is important
    6. What visitors can see/do at the National Park
    7. Draw a picture of the National Park
2. See the next page for an idea for making a journal

### Wrap-Up Activities

1. Tell students that each National Park has a guide describing why that Park is important and what visitors can do at that National Park. Tell students they will make a guide for all or each Park FR visited.
2. Here are ideas on creating park guides:
  - o Divide students into groups and have each group make a guide
  - o Have each student make a guide
3. See next page for information on making a National Park guide.

## **National Park Guide**

1. Tell students they will make National Park guides for each National Park Flat Ranger visited.
2. Tell students that National Park guides tell why the Park is important and have pictures, maps, and what activities are available for visitors.
3. Here is an idea to create National Park guides:
  - Give each student/group of students a piece of construction paper
  - Have students fold the construction paper into a pamphlet form
4. The following information should be included:
  - National Park name
  - Which State the Park is in
  - Why the Park is important
  - Activities available to visitors
  - Drawing or picture of the Park

### **Provided Materials**

- Park Brochures
- Information sent by National Parks

### **Teacher-Supplied Materials**

- Markers or crayons, computer paper, scissors, glue, fabric, construction paper or poster board, hole punch, string

### **How to Make a Journal**

1. Decide what size journal you want to make. A half or quarter sheet of computer paper is good. Cut paper to desired size and punch holes in the side where you want to bind the book.
2. Decide what to use for a cover. Construction paper or poster board works well. Cut to fit over paper, so it's 1/4" bigger on the unfolded sides.
2. Punch holes in the computer paper and cover.
3. Now you are ready to bind the book. Use string or anything you have available.

## **Extensions**

1. Students write essays describing what it would be like to travel with Flat Ranger.
2. Students give presentations on a Park their FR visited.
3. Students create displays of the National Parks FR visited.
4. Students study the climate of one or more National Parks FR visited and compare to their climate.
5. Students use FR's travels and their own search on the internet for information on National Parks at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) and choose five Parks that they want to visit in person. Then explain in an oral report or written essay why they choose those five.

**Overall Student Evaluation/Assessment:** Should be on student participation, individual or group created National Park Guides, journals, and/or extensions.